

## Contributions

### DELIVERANCE

J. D. M'FADEN

It is midnight and I stand alone. Darkness surrounds me; not a patch of blue is seen in the sky; not a ray of hope flickers from twinkling stars to the earth; the big black clouds are heaped in billows on each other; here and there in the sleeping town is the faint light kept burning by some cautious mother; in the distance is the shrill echo of the locomotive signal as it responds to the pressure of the master hand on its throttle. I am all alone,—alone, so far as human beings are concerned. Yet I am not alone. I am fighting the same old fight of my life,—not with the beasts at Ephesus, but with the wild beasts of the present which come crowding around me in this lonely midnight hour.

There is the great, gaunt wolf of poverty, his sharp claws have torn, and his fetid breath sickened me time and again. I have beaten him off until failure has made him more feverish for my blood, and he is keenly watching his chance to seize me.

There is the tiger of habit, reared from a tiny cub. Now he is full grown, strong and treacherous. I have often thought him tame and conquered, but in unexpected moments he growls, shows his teeth and lashes his sides, until his angry snarls make me wonder about the future.

There is the serpent of pain, and as he lightly coils his slimy folds around my body I hear his ugly hiss in my ear, and I hold his neck in my grip. Yet some sudden contraction of his mighty muscles may loosen my agonizing clasp, and at the thought of such awful consequences the death damp oozes from every pore, and terrors unutterable seize me. Which way I fly is hell, while clawing wolf and snarling tiger and hissing serpent are its agents to destroy me.

There are none to help. Wife and children and friends fail me. One after another has turned away and left me. Science, and philosophy, and business, and pleasure have failed me. I have leaned, panting with fear and praying for help on them, and they broke under my weight, while I fell, hopeless in the swamp of doubt, and in the mire of despair. I am alone. Of the people there are none to help. It is the midnight hour of my experience and there is no deliverance. The world is sleeping, wrapped in its shroud of selfishness. Poverty and sin and pain are fighting me, struggling to claim me as their own, and I alone in the awful midnight hour of life.

But listen! I thought I heard a voice. Out of the black depths of the night a whisper reaches me, listen! Hope is the word the voice sent out of the darkness. Hope. Is this the key that will solve the problem of my trouble? Is this the weapon that will slay the foes that dodge my steps? Is this

the friend that brings relief and will quiet my troubled mind? My mother spoke this word when, an innocent boy, I stood and prattled at her knee. My teacher taught me the same when in school I listened to his counsel, and when in manhood's prime I now and then in open pew hearken to the preacher's words. He spoke of One who was to be the hope of all and to whom the weary one and troubled heart might for refuge flee. Is He the one to aid me in this most desolate hour?

But alas! What am I? A poor, struggling soul, and alas! What have I but poverty, sin and pain? Would he stoop to such as I? They tell me that when this hope of all the world was but a babe, and, in the manger laid, visitors young and old gave him gifts, rich and rare. What gifts have I? They tell me that when a boy he talked with men wise and learned, but I am steeped in ignorance. They tell me that, when a man, he fulfilled all righteousness, but I am a sinner and know not what purity is. They tell me that, when hanging on a tree and dying amid great pain and agony, his enemies he forgave, while I have invoked his curses on those earthly fiends who have sicked on me so true these awful beasts of hell. I see no ray of hope for me, but only death in agony, and then eternal shame.

I turn away from the measurement that fails me, and in my thoughts go to that far off land, where once He lived and died and helped poor wretches just like me. I see him, the blessed Hope, with patient step and wondrous sigh, in lonely hours and tearful eye, with soothing hand and tender voice, reach out and touch the unhealed sore, unbind the lame and sight restore, and dead lift up and homes made glad, until the demons damned back to their pit with angry roar, found a safe retreat from Him who had such wondrous power. I watch him pray in one lone hour, and see him climb the bloody way. I hear him laid in Joseph's tomb, and cry with joy as up the shining way he passes to his heavenly home.

I wonder why I have not turned to him before, and freed myself from demons wild by passing thru the open door, for He who conquered death and hell can save me from my foes. Now there has come to me a shy, sweet, strange feeling of peace and gladness. Fear has left me, my better nature is touched by favor; hope is linked with resurrection power. I have help; my friend has come; the wolf of poverty has fled; the tiger of habit is dead; the serpent of pain has crawled away; I am free. He who was among the wild beasts has conquered me.

It is midnight no longer; it is morning; the red streaks of day are tinging the sky; a golden glow covers the east, and the brightness deepens; the birds are singing songs as they never sang before; fragrance from the flowers of grace sweeten my life. It is springtime and summer combined in my heart. Deliverance has come thru one I love and trust and own. I have opened the windows eastward.

### SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR GERMAN BAPTIST BRETHREN

J. L. GILLIN

Recently we had occasion to attend a love feast of our German Baptist friends.

In our minds some questions arose as we gave attention to the services and in perfect candor and a sincere desire to know and have others know the truth I should like to have them answer the following questions:

1. Is it generally held by their fraternity, as we heard a minister of theirs say, that, "God will wash away our sins, because we wash each others' feet?" It had always been our belief that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." I Jno. 1:7.

2. Where is authority found in God's word for treating the sisters differently from the brethren, in the breaking of bread and passing of the cup?

The officiating brother said, "The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ," and allowed the brother to whom he said this to help break the bread. But when it came to the sisters he said the same words, "The bread which *we* break, etc," but broke it himself and gave it to the sister. Why did he not say, "The bread which *I* break, etc," or else do as he said? Likewise in regard to the cup.

3. The officiating brother also said, in commenting on the bread, "Paul says, 'the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' Now the church is the body of Christ, hence, the bread which we break is the communion of the church."

We beg to ask, then, what then does it signify when we say, "The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ?" If by the "body" here spoken of is meant the church, what is meant by the "blood?"

4. Was the kiss exchanged in the ordinance of footwashing the salutation commanded in several epistles of Paul? If so, where is the authority in God's word for insisting on two salutations in the love feast? If it is not, what is it, and where is the authority for its observance there?

We shall be glad for any information on these things.

### HINDERED BY BELIEF

C. H. WETHERBE

Singular as it may seem, one may hinder himself from possible blessings by his belief. We commonly say that it is one's unbelief which hinders him from receiving the things which he needs, and this is indeed true; but it is also true that many people hinder themselves from receiving the truth which they ought to have, by their belief. How can this be? The answer is, in one's believing a false doctrine he hinders himself from accepting the true doctrine which stands opposed to the false one. All men believe some things. All men are naturally believers, but there is a great difference between people as to what they believe. Those who, from a